(d) An Inter-Ministerial Central Team visited the Bundelkhand areas and some tehsils in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh in the 4th week of January, 2008, to study the drought like situation in these areas with a view to assessing the ground situation and the scale of implementation of various medium-term and long-term drought mitigation programmes/ schemes and to recommend strategy and various measures that are required for agriculture development suitable for the areas to ameliorate the current situation. Further action would be taken after receipt of the Team's report.

(e) National Agricultural Insurance Scheme is applicable in Uttar Pradesh including Bundelkhand areas. However, crops/areas to be covered are notified by the State Government.

Justifiable prices for agricultural produce

t796. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that how to get farmers justifiable prices for their produce, is not a matter of priority for Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite all Government announcements/packages farmer suicides continue unabated; and

(c) if not, the details of efforts and achievements made by Government in getting farmers lucrative price for their produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The Government's price policy for agricultural commodities seeks to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce with a view to encourage higher investment and production, and to safeguard the interest of consumers by making available supplies at reasonable prices. The price policy also seeks to evolve a balanced and integrated price structure in the perspective of the overall needs of the economy.

The Government decides on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for various agricultural commodities taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the views of State Governments and Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors which are considered important for fixation of support prices. The CACP, while formulating its recommendations on price policy considers a number of important factors which includes cost of production.

* The causes for suicide by farmers, as reported by the State Governments, are broadly crop failure, indebtendness, drought, social and economic insecurity. The Government being sensitive to the difficulties of the farming community, the Union Budget for 2008-09 has proposed, especially for the small and marginal farmers, a scheme of debt waiver and debt relief.

Unending farm tragedy

797. PROF. M.S. SWAMINATHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

f Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an editorial in English print media captioned "The Unending Farm Tragedy" on 2nd February, 2008; and

(b) if so, what are steps being taken to end this tragic phase of our agricultural history?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA):(a)Yes,Sir.

(b) To address the problem of suicide by farmers, Government of India has approved a Rehabilitation Package amounting to Rs. 16978.69 crore, for 31 districts spread over the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. The Package aims at establishing a sustainable and viable farming and livelihood support system through debt relief to farmers, improved supply of institutional credit, assured irrigation facilities, watershed management, better extension and farming support services and subsidiary income opportunities.

Based on the Revised Draft National Policy for Farmers submitted by the National Commission on farmers, the Government has approved the National Policy for Farmers, 2007, Various recommendations made by the Commission for rejuvenation of agriculture and allied sectors, as accepted by the Government, have been incorporated in the National Policy for Farmers. For revitalization of agriculture sector, Government has launched two new Schemes namely, National Food Security Mission (NFSM) to improve productivity and production of foodgrains in the country and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) with and objective to incentivise the States so as to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors. Besides, a number of inititives, Plan Schemes and programmes including the initiatives/ programmes announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been taken/initiated, including a scheme of debt waiver/debt relief for farmers.

Deficiency in NFSM

798. MS. MABEL REBELLO:

PROF. M.S. SWAMINATHAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of the National Food Security Mission;

(b) whether the small and marginal farmers are able to meet 50 per cent of the cost of implements and other inputs as stipulated in the NFSM; and

(c) the number of small and marginal farmers who have been able to pay 50 per cent of the cost and take part in the Mission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The National Food Security Mission has been launched with effect from Rabi 2007-08 in 17 States of the country. Under the National Food Security Mission the beneficiaries may contribute 50% of the cost of their own or avail credit from banks for any intervention including farm implements. In such cases, the subsidy for specific component will be released to the banks from which the credit is availed. The States have been requested to earmark at least 33 per cent of the total allocation of the Mission to small and marginal farmers including women and SC and ST farmers.